

Analysis of Welfare Society

¿Agustín García Calvo?

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Table of contents

Presentation

- (1) We are not doing philosophy or literature here, but politics for the people
- (2) We struggle for that which does not exist
- (3) On the present situation of Development, and its boundaries
- (4) On how the outside misery creeps in
- (5) On majorities and their acceptance of substitutes
- (6) On how things turn into money and Money into the inheritor of everything
- (7) On the standard of profitability and the identity of Capital and State
- (8) On how the notion of “public services” has lost its sense
- (9) On the falsification of taxes
- (10) Divine money versus human money
- (11) On the human being beloved by the banks and the State
- (12) On the universal prostitution
- (13) On the value of one’s Personal Signature
- (14) On the Executives’ inevitable modesty
- (15) On there being no escape from Money unless we get rid of the Person
- (16) From Trade Unions to psychoanalysis
- (17) On how easy it is to knock down the Regime
- (18) What can replace the stimulus of money?
- (19) On machines and the criterion of utility
- (20) On preserving what proved to be good
- (21) Who the heck needs the States?
- (22) On snakes and doves
- (23) On the separation between public and private
- (24) On the mirror image that is reflected from outside the boundaries of Development
- (25) On not keeping up with the times

Note: Translator’s notes appear at the end of each chapter.

Presentation

We are going to compile in what follows a series of attacks against the Regime that were published at regular intervals in DIARIO 16(1) between August 4th and October 5th of this year(2).

Our reason for writing them was that we were beginning to suffer, since the conclusion of the past, a “personalized attention” (this at least is how I have seen that some of the products and services of our times are being advertised, in a rather telltale fashion) on the part of tax collectors and public finance investigators, something which, to be honest, had plunged us into a rather unpleasant depression – for if all the attention that is directed to us on a personal level (I mean this ordinary and continuous crime of knowing a person), regardless of whether it is meant to insult us or to exalt us, has no other effect than reducing each one of us to the misery of being oneself, how devastating will the results of such an operation be for the attempt to do at least something (in spite of the world and although we would still be stopping short of living our lives even in the case of being able to do it) when this personalized attention concerns something so extremely intimate as a person’s financial transactions (given that these are, according to certain conjectures to be found in Freudian analysis, the transactions with shit, or to be more precise, with one’s own shit and with the State’s shit at the same time), unless, indeed, we get converted to the predominant Faith and begin to chant the Credo in unum Deum!

So that is why it is not surprising that we refused to leave these financial affairs in the closet of privacy, and that we succeeded, when putting them into the limelight with some trick effect included, in provoking, willy-nilly, a public commotion that has stirred up the Media and kept them occupied for a period of nearly two months – something that would perhaps even give us a reason to rejoice, as in the course of this hubbub we could learn about a number of opposed and conflicting sentiments that were expressed by rather broad-minded people as well as by those who had already auctioned themselves off at the highest bid, with respect to the Person’s relationship with the Treasury and the State in general, and the futile contradiction between morals and politics.

The present series of articles had begun to be published before these public commotions took place, but then there is no reason to deny that the aforementioned “attention” on the part of tax collectors and public finance investigators might well have served as an encouragement to undertake and continue the present analysis. In other words, it is the civil servants of the Treasury (surprise, surprise!) who ought to be congratulated by any grateful reader of this book, for having taken the initiative.

In the present observations on tax-paying we may probably find the point that connects the two principal lines of argumentation that provide the backbone, as it were, for this series of articles: (a) the necessity to ignore all kinds of distraction by any other form of tyranny and to concentrate on attacking Money, given that Money has eventually revealed itself as the true core of Power; and (b) the necessity to transcend the dissociation between personal life and public life and to convert the Person itself into a topic to be tackled when making politics for the people.

This means speaking out, and what is worse, it means writing and publishing in newspapers and books. But as the Lord’s Kingdom is neither perfect nor eternal, it may turn out that even dead letters can regurgitate living words, at least to the extent to which we succeed, in what follows, in saying something different from what has already been said and arranged, and in tracing some of what people feel beneath their conscience and their personality; and that is because the words that are not at the service of Ideas and Cultures are expressions of common language and common sense, areas where there is no possible separation between words and deeds.

Dear reader, do not despise these observations all too quickly, and do not lend them any kind of

faith, either: Simply allow them to act on yourself and on those who surround you, and thus to achieve whatever they can.

Notes:

(1) A now extinct Spanish newspaper.

(2) This must be referring to the year 1993, date of the first edition of this book.

1. We are not doing philosophy or literature here, but politics for the people

Once we realized that the Noticias de abajo(1), the Avisos para el derrumbe(2) and the whole series of Noes(3) that we brought to light against many obstacles in El País(4) perhaps to some, as in fact they made them laugh, did not appear to be sufficiently serious, we have decided to try to formulate, by means and in the pay of another honourable newspaper, a precise description, less contaminated by laughter, of this world in which we live, that is to say a succinct indictment of the principal lies and fallacies by means of which this world sustains itself.

We need to point out right at the beginning that in this world of Development, which all the bank employees and the civil servants of the Treasury have already learnt to call the Welfare Society, Philosophy and Literature are not prevented from thriving and flourishing magnificently (side by side with Science, an academic branch that is respectfully complemented by them in its aims and functions), so that in fact they manage to occupy in the Welfare State the place that they deserve – when all the gossips have had their lives almost completely filled up with television operas and even the most modest and least experienced of all civil servants knows how to talk about the Philosophy of Companies (or that of the New Administration), there is certainly no need to further demonstrate this fact.

And this is why all those who work in these departments (and also, indistinctly, the producers of sophisticated philosophy and literature for select masses of people) ought to understand what they probably will resist understanding: that by making literature or philosophy they are in fact doing politics, the politics of conformity, to be precise, regardless of whether they deal with the events of human life as if they were things that happen to us because they were simply meant to occur (“That is Reality, my dear: what else did you suppose?”), somewhat like monstrous flowers that sprout spontaneously in the fields of History (and as good old Brassens(5) remarked, “the Law of Gravity is harsh, but it is the law”) – or whether they devote themselves to entertaining their readers (or their television spectators, that is all the same) with fairy tales while these few years of life are passing by, just to let us see if they will die unaware of what has happened.

And therefore, if it occurs to someone to speak with the people’s voice or to speak for the subjected and never completely resigned, then this person will not be able to produce philosophy or literature, as that would be a contribution to the Politics of Theirs, but rather he will be doing – what? – well, politics of course, but a different kind of politics which is the opposite of Theirs.

Do we really want to adopt so eccentric and preposterous a position? Well, we may rely, after all, on getting some assistance from the poor people’s own voice while it keeps grumbling in these lower strata – a people that never dies and therefore does not have to worry about counting Time; and we shall also draw on the fact that this world sustains itself on nothing but Faith (or Credit), that is to say on lies – and in the face of that, the unruly people’s language will always have a certain impact.

Notes:

(1) “News from below”.

(2) “Indications for demolition”.

(3) “Noes”.

(4) A Spanish newspaper in which the author published various series of articles that were later re-edited under the above-mentioned titles.

(5) Georges Brassens was a French songwriter who was born in 1921 and died in 1981.

2. We struggle for that which does not exist

In the present analysis or investigation we are led, as we were saying, by the people from below, by that which still remains alive. But then it turns out that the people, as it is nothing more than a negation (that which is not composed of Persons, or that which is not the Democratic Majority but rather just the opposite, namely all of us – in other words, that which does not exist, given that it has better things to do, the poor people), does inevitably say “NO” and nothing but “NO”: that this is not what life was like, that that is not how it used to be, that we do not believe, my Lord, that I do not believe, and that I do not forget the cereals and how good they tasted, even though I must swallow, like Iriarte’s donkey(1), the straw that they feed me; and so on, following the whole string of “NOES” that every now and then sprout from people’s hearts in daily life (from their hearts, we must underscore, which are not to be confounded with the little soul, milady, that you keep in your cupboard, as that one would never say “NO”).

But this being so, how can a mere “NO” be inspiring and helpful for any serious analysis or investigation of Welfare Society? Are we supposed to be satisfied with saying “NO” to each of the things that we are offered? Are we not here, engaging in this analysis, because we are struggling for something positive? Is there really nothing that we want to achieve?

Dear me, so many unanswered questions – it looks as if we ought to reply at least something, shall we not? – Well, indeed: We are here also struggling to achieve something. And what kind of thing do we want to achieve? Well, we struggle to achieve that which does not exist, that much is clear. Because otherwise, what would be the point of it? After all, the struggle for that which exists is already being conducted by THEM, I mean by the executives of the Welfare State, and it is being defended by them every day, including their attempt to make all citizens join them in one single struggle for the same kind of thing, namely for that which exists and is supposed to be convenient for the citizen, given that he also has a right to exist, the poor guy.

So that those who are so happy about that which exists, and who love it to the extent of being prepared to spend all their lives working just in order to facilitate its further development and to ensure by their work that it continues to exist – if they are so positive about Reality and about everything’s being simply what it is, without there being room for any more subtleties, if they believe so much in this Reality that they have surrendered to Reality the Reality of each person’s little soul – then of course they will find no point in reading (let alone in replying to) this analysis of their Society: because here we are struggling for that which does not exist, given that of that which does we are completely fed up, and given that we think that it is worth while finding out if we can use life and reason to do something different from what is already done.

“What a naivety, to have so much faith!”, some of our readers will perhaps think, while shaking their heads with pity.

Faith? – Not at all, my dear reader, and this is something we ought to explain as clearly as possible before we continue. We do not have any faith at all, since what we need for our struggle is precisely a complete lack of faith: the absence, in other words, of that faith which inspires the believers in Welfare Society as well as those who believe in Reality in general – a Reality that sustains itself on nothing but faith (I mean the Majority’s faith), given that all that which exists owes its existence necessarily to faith.

On the other hand, a certain lack of faith is already sufficient in order to enable us to start investigating the causes of what is happening to us, and to contribute in this way to the struggle for that which does not exist.

Notes:

(1) Tomás de Iriarte, who was born in 1750 and died in 1791, was a Spanish writer famous for his fables.

3. On the present situation of Development, and its boundaries

Let us begin, as if we were having a Geography lesson, by examining where the aforementioned Development may be found and how far its limits or boundaries have advanced.

It is evidently situated in the middle of the rest of the world, I mean the undeveloped regions, whose extension and population are still supposed to form the greater part of it. But this is not something that Development would care too much about, since it is conscious that the remaining territories and people are also in the process of getting developed, and that in any case there is no other future nor any other ideal or aspiration for them than that of trying to get integrated into the Welfare Society.

What does it matter, after all, that there are vast empty areas in the Antarctic and in Siberia, a still resisting rainforest around the Amazon river and countless half-forgotten islands in Polynesia? All this has already been taken into account, and Development has its schemes and intentions that consist in making them serve, like everything else, as raw material for the movement of Capital and as an opportunity to create millions of new Jobs. What does it matter that China and Indonesia have a population of what-have-you and that there remain, in Iran or in the heart of Africa, awful traces of religious fanaticism and archaic rule? All this has already been allotted the common destiny of Development, and if the Chinese or the African students rise up against the ancient and brutal condition of their respective nations, it will never be to achieve anything else (in this faith we live) than the implementation of Developed Democracy and the Welfare State.

It is true that in these outskirts of Development we keep observing an unceasing chain of miserable circumstances and unfortunate events: there is hardly a day on which we do not have to confront, out there in the surroundings of Development (and with particular fury in the belt of regions that are nearest to the Welfare Societies: the Near East, Central America, Somalia, the ruins of the socialist countries), horrifying epidemics of hunger and devastating little wars conducted on a low flame – but then of course there is no need to tell you any further details, as our television screens are every day full of these events, not to mention the front pages of our newspapers, given that this (together with epic films about the great wars of the past) is what serves to make the masses become conscious, by way of contrast, of the Welfare they enjoy.

In any case, these are topics that we know to discuss, like many others, with comprehension (though of course without asking where this desperate hunger and these archaic and uncivilized wars may have originated): it is all just the pains of giving birth, the inevitable convulsions (have we not all of us felt them at some point in our lives?) that are necessary in order to arrive at the Welfare condition. And so we even know perfectly well how to deal with these things, showing frightened compassion and giving humanitarian aid (unsufficient of course, but what are we supposed to do, dear reader, if these poor people multiply themselves at such a speed?), through the political institutions of Development of course (or perhaps through the economic institutions, as there does not seem to be much of a difference between the two).

So far so good, but it is precisely at this point that we detect a fundamental dialectic confusion that we ought to expose as soon as possible: people think (or rather believe) that we ourselves, living inside the Welfare Society, can enjoy the blessings of this Welfare (with more or less pangs of conscience) even though it be constructed on top of something else and surrounded by the misery of millions, given that the quality of this Welfare is supposed to remain unaffected by the external circumstances I mentioned.

But this is not so. And as this a very important fallacy or lie, we shall have to examine in the next chapter in what way the misery of the outskirts determines the quality of the wealth that people are enjoying in the Centre.

4. On how the outside misery creeps in

This is a point of elementary dialectics: The belief that one can enjoy one's wealth in the midst of other people's misery without there being any influence or transformation of one's wealth on the part of the surrounding misery is false, but at the same time of essential importance for the operation and maintenance of Development itself.

In order to understand this correctly, we have to avoid all kinds of appeal to conscience and free will; for otherwise we shall always remain stuck in the same fallacy. If the poor people's vengeance had to depend on the (personal or collective) pangs of conscience that may affect their exploiters, possibly disturbing their sleep and spoiling their feasts, the prospects would be pretty gloomy for the poor and miserable. As if it was not perfectly obvious that the exploiter can only be what he is because he can resort to an idea that justifies his conduct and helps him clean up his conscience!

No: The poor people's vengeance is an objective dialectic interaction; it has nothing to do with anyone's conscience but rather attacks the objects themselves, in this case the consumer goods of Welfare Society, which end up being altered in their very essence and reality in virtue of this relation between Development itself and the misery that surrounds it.

This is a law that of course was already in force before Development came about. After all, Development is nothing else than the present pronouncement of the whole of History. It was well known in our grandfathers' times (for instance in the times of our grandfather Marx) that the bourgeois person's wealth is just a product of the workers' misery (or of them selling their lives), and it became known a little later, when in the 1950's people were crying out against neocolonialism and other outdated contraptions of exploitation, that the rich countries' wealth (where saying "countries" is actually hypocrisy, as we rather ought to say "states") consisted likewise in the poor countries' misery, given that these poor countries were impoverished, exactly like the proletarians of previous times, to the same extent to which they contributed to the rich countries' enrichment.

But all this was criticized in a way that at the height of Development is proving obviously fallacious: it was believed that at least the bourgeois exploiters, or the rich states, were really in a position to enjoy the products of other people's misery. Those were accusations imbued with false morality, and therefore imbued with the wrong political implications for the people, and above all they were simply untrue, given that they allowed people to continue submitting Capital to the process of Development, so that in the end everything would stay the same. In sum, Development will have served one day at least to demonstrate its own incoherence: In the process of Development the very idea of the personal beneficiary, as well as the idea of the personally exploited, are ending up in the pillory. For who is the exploited person? The worker who cooperates with Development and thus owns a car, a detached house and a bank account? And who is the exploiter? The leading executive (of the State or of Capital, there is not much of a difference) who spends more hours at work than anybody else?

The idea of "exploitation" itself was fallacious: It was nothing more than a vague allusion, somewhat clumsy and misleading, to the true dialectic relation between "wealth" and "poverty".

No: To the extent to which the administration of misery is developed and improved, wealth itself, once its objective, is transformed, getting more and more miserable itself and becoming shallow and empty, and it is in this objective process where the poor peoples' vengeance takes place, turning against the consumer goods themselves.

The precise nature of this process in which wealth, under the conditions of the Welfare Society, is

getting increasingly shallow and empty, is the topic that we shall try to elucidate in the following chapter.

5. On majorities and their acceptance of substitutes

We have seen that the poverty on which Development sustains itself does not become apparent as any Person's bad conscience, but rather as the bad quality of the objects themselves.

But what does this bad quality consist in? Because the truth is that Persons are notoriously satisfied with the goods of Welfare Society, even to the extent that this old complaint about "present times being worse than any period of the past" does no longer seem to be valid for the subjects of Development: it is almost as if the expression "any period of the past" were itself a matter of the past, and as if the only appropriate attitude now were rather that of satisfaction with the present; or perhaps even of satisfaction with the Future, given that we are perfectly aware that these present times have already been turned almost completely into future (but never mind that as long as we like them).

Only very occasionally can we hear from below some sort of grumbling or complaining, not by any Person but rather by some people, claiming that none of this is what it used to be, that the goods of Welfare Society have a taste of emptiness, we hear the suspicion that Development is selling us a cat while calling it a hare(1), the suspicion that the hare does no longer taste like a hare, nor the trout like a trout, and other occasional resentments of the same kind; and we must in any case draw inspiration also from this momentary evidence, as it is infrequent enough to hear people talk freely below the level of Personal Expression...

In a word, it turns out that the whole management(2) of Welfare consists basically in the mechanism of substitution. Let us remind ourselves that the Ersatz was invented in times of war, or in (already far-off) postwar periods of material shortages, but be that as it may, this was the invention that gave rise to the spread and the general acceptance of the Substitute, the basis on which Welfare was to be founded.

The fact is that ordinary things or consumer goods, although they sometimes keep their traditional names (unless it occurs to someone to coin the New Name in order to replace and sweep away the antiquated one, just like this Divine Executive, for instance, who declared, subscribing years ago one of these characteristic blunders of Development, that a motorway is not the same thing as a road, and that this is the reason why we need to have a concept of "motorway"), are no longer ordinary things but rather representatives or instances of them – instances of things that the subjects of Development have to nourish themselves on and to entertain themselves with, just as if they were genuine objects.

And the same transformation that happens to Names will of course also happen to Verbs: the actions they denote are no longer done, we no longer travel in the true sense of the word, nor do we drink or sleep or even screw, but what happens is that we stage, as it were, the idea of each of these actions, which is the purpose for which we find this idea in our vocabulary.

We must deal immediately with a couple of possible objections: There is no obstacle in the fact that even at the height of Development the quality of some consumer goods is in fact very good or even excellent, nor in the fact that there remain a few unfortunate people who do not swallow what the Reign of Welfare has in store for them, who do not know how to replace things by substitutes and who therefore get increasingly isolated and marginalized and fall prey to an archaic kind of misery – nor is there any difficulty in the fact that there are also a couple of smart operators who refuse to be given a cat instead of a hare and who privately achieve some genuine enjoyment of things, or at least manage to give themselves an occasional treat as a sort of compensation or digression from the everyday substitutes, indulging in something authentic to which a remainder of common sense has led them.

All this is of little consequence: because what matters to the Welfare Regime is that the majority of people live on substitutes (or that they do it most of the time) – in short, that they accept to reside in their flats as if they were houses, that they call plastic “fabric”, that they no longer aim to afford a driver or to pay for a railway trip, but rather want to be the driver themselves, and of course to enjoy it, while calling noise “music”...

What matters is that people must have an idea of what they are doing, and that whatever they do is therefore nothing but an enactment of their ideas.

But how this sleight of hand is carried out is something that we cannot really understand unless we talk about money.

Notes:

(1) “To sell a cat as a hare” is a proverbial expression in Spanish.

(2) This word is in English.

6. On how things turn into money and Money into the inheritor of everything

Let us, then, talk about money, or in other words, about Reality. For what can be more real than money?

We must admit that we find this reality of Money a bit upsetting, given that they still try to make us believe that the “real” thing must be something hard, something tangible or perhaps even alimentary (and some people proceed to call money “material”, given that they call “materialists” those who devote themselves to making money), while on the other hand it is obvious that Money does not fulfill these conditions of being tangible, hard or material in any sense of the term. The misers of past times still used to plunge their hands deep into the coldness of their doubloons; Angela Carter’s Daisy Delaney (in *Wise Children*, 1991) could still in the last years of the great Hollywood deal tell her lover, the Great Film Producer, to carry a couple of suitcases full of millions of dollar banknotes from the bank to her hotel so she could empty them onto her bed and wallow in money; but nowadays, at the height of Development, who on Earth is still able to wallow in his credit, in the monthly statement of his accounts or in some numeric proportion between the import and the export amounts of the Welfare States?

In fact there is nothing less material, nothing more ideal, more abstract and more sublime than Money in its most recent and sophisticated forms. The truth is that its essence, as is appropriate to such a high degree of ideality, does not consist in anything but the numbers that serve to describe it: one can say “8,000,000,000”, and what comes after the numbers (pounds sterling, dollars, tons of citrus fruit, heads of cattle, inhabitants of the capital) is just a sort of appendix, a mere pretext for pronouncing the number, which is what really expresses the etherial essence of Money.

So far so good, but we must not be misled, on the aforementioned grounds, into denying reality to Money – quite the opposite: we shall not be able to come to any other conclusion than that Reality is essentially a question of money, or in other words an ideal question, according to what we have argued. And this is what Reality is like:

Things have disappeared. Money, once only their representative, has been converted into a thing itself: the most material of all things, namely Reality. For which other reality can we find apart from that of Money?

“Now would you please refrain from entangling us in fallacies”, some economist with archaic ideas about what economy means (as indeed it will be convenient for Development that the ideas of its economists are, above all, archaic) may possibly object, “for after all it remains true that a given currency is ‘in force’ because it continues to represent objects, because by means of money we have access to consumer goods, to lobsters and to hi-fi sets”. And this would certainly be true, were it not that, while money was being converted into an object, the other objects have suffered in turn a dialectical process in the opposite sense.

So this is why our economist cannot be right; and what we see and experience is that the objects have in turn become money, as in fact was only to be expected. Which means that what you are doing, madam, when you go to the supermarket, is nothing else than exchanging certain forms of money for others; it is not at all different from what you do when you go to the bank, given that the bank is the store of all stores, where (precisely because you do not get anything tangible for your money) what they sell you is the reality of all realities, exactly the same kind of reality that you can buy in a shop.

Now I hope that this emptiness of the consumer goods of Welfare that we were discussing the other day has become a bit clearer and more comprehensible: I mean the fact that all objects and human

actions get replaced by an idea of what they are. This was in fact our thesis: that Money is the idea of all ideas.

But the process of something's being replaced by an idea of what it is will evidently affect persons in the same way as objects – or is it not true that you are as real yourself as the lobster you have bought, or as the compact disk that you give as a present to your daughter? So this is another question that we shall also have to explore.

7. On the standard of profitability and the identity of Capital and State

We shall indeed have to talk about the Persons who, given that they are real, are in fact also money. But first of all we must try to get rid of certain misconceptions that continue to prevail in the Reign of Welfare, suggesting false distinctions in order to mislead our faculty of reason, so that reason, being entertained with discussions on whether certain proceedings, for example, ought to be “private” or “public”, or whether there should be a so-called “State administration” or a “privatization of public services”, shall never discover the true lies and fallacies that Welfare is based on.

We are referring to the fact that Private Companies and Public Administration have long ago tightened up their wedlock to the extent of forming one single soul and becoming each of them by any reckoning indistinguishable from the other, far from the state of affairs that was familiar to grandfather Marx, who could still distinguish between the capitalist exploiter and the politicians, the watchdogs of Capital.

And yet, the idea of a separation between one thing and the other, the idea that something is at stake when we talk about the State taking charge of some company or about some public institutions being transferred to the private sector, continues to be in force in this world, in spite of its vacuity or perhaps precisely as a result of it, inducing us to such an outrageous nonsense as to asking, for example, if there is any difference between a State television and a private television – as if we did not know only too well what television consists in.

So the truth is that State and Capital are one and the same thing and only simulate to be different in order to disguise themselves; and that likewise politicians and bankers are the same kind of people, being only God in a position to distinguish⁽¹⁾ between the Divine Executives of Private Companies and those of Government Agencies (or the Trade Unions); as on the other hand is hardly surprising and even almost inevitable, given that both kinds of institutions are motivated and sustained by one and the same thing: one single Faith in Future, one single Idea, one single idealism, or in other words, exactly the same belief in Money being the reality of all realities.

And the touchstone that serves to prove the identity of Capital and the State, and to refute the (still prevailing) lie that there is a difference between them, is the Standard of Profitability. This Standard is something that we can observe every day as it is applied indistinctly in State Institutions and in Private Institutions, and what is more, with ever-increasing shamelessness, as perhaps is only to be expected given that the motto “My dear son, one must not speak about money” was something characteristic of the old bourgeois people, whereas nowadays there is nothing more decent, nothing more honourable, than talking about money, with this cheerful forthrightness of course that the Executives of the Bank Consortium display as well as those of the Ministry of Finance; and given that God appears in the Welfare Reign essentially under the guise of money, what would be more honest and straightforward, or what would be more innocent, indeed, than confessing explicitly that we are only pursuing the production of our daily profit, or the increase of volumes and amounts? Anything else, any other kind of discourse, is unequivocally suspicious to the Lord.

What a pity, then, that this Standard of Profitability has no other effect on people than messing them around on a world-wide scale. This is because any Executive of one branch of administration or the other can at any time take the cherries out of people’s mouths, the cows out of their meadows, the railway or the ground itself away under their feet, and all of it in virtue of the Standard of Profitability: because what is at issue here, my dear friend, is production, profit and future, or in other words money, and so please do not bother us with fairy tales or with excuses, because in the face of all these improvements the old-fashioned little things and hearts will have to bend their heads and step down, so much is for sure. Kindly refrain from making such a fuss about it and

please excuse us for any inconvenience we may be causing, but after all we are working for your future.

This is the sense in which the Standard of Profitability does not only serve to reveal the identity of Capital and the State, but also to refute the outdated concept of “public services”, as we are going to demonstrate in the following chapter.

Notes:

(1) Here the author uses an untranslatable pun.

8. On how the notion of “public services” has lost its sense

We are referring to the fact that the general imposition of the Standard of Profitability has immediately deprived the old concept of “public service” of all its meaning (even if it remains in force in spite of its vacuity): for this Standard assumes as a matter of fact that what is good for Money (or for the transformation of Capital) is also good for the Person, or for the Human Being; an assumption that obviously can only be true to the extent to which Man himself has completely turned into money or has been completely identified with his capital; and only if there remain some traces of non-financial demands in people, I mean demands of things that are rather more concrete, perceptible and tangible, or if there remain some people who have not yet been converted into the idea of Man, then the credibility of the assumption loses ground and the Standard of Profitability will itself be called into question.

As a matter of fact, these other demands of things that are more manifest and perceptible were precisely the demands to be satisfied, albeit in a more or less fallacious manner, by the old-fashioned notion of “public services”, which means that in certain kinds of dominance previous to Welfare, in which the identity of Capital and State was not yet as blatant and well-established as it is now, there was a thing called “Public Services” (or if you prefer, “PS”), supposed to compensate people for the humiliations and the oppression they were suffering in the name of their Fatherland (or rather their bosses’ Fatherland(1)) by making a few amends (given that the State was feeling obliged to make amends by some sort of “institutional bad conscience”) – a compensation that consisted in devoting a certain part of the State’s revenue (never a really significant part, of course, but at least some of it) to tasks such as improving roads, maintaining schools, cleaning streets and public gardens, or building hospitals and homes for the poor, in short, to that kind of thing.

In this State of previous times, there was of course a clear distinction between the different forms of public charity (or Public Services) on the one hand and anything that remotely resembled the Standard of Profitability on the other: a Public Service was normally unprofitable (that is to say, not productive of money), given that it was supposed to respond to perceptible or tangible demands and necessities for the benefit of ordinary people, and not to demands that were artificially created from Above.

Something entirely different was the fact that some verger or some agent of the Public Services might have been diverting certain amounts of money (as was almost the norm) into his own pocket at the general public’s expense (blessed be the good old kind of corruption!), but if it had occurred to anyone to declare that the Public Services were themselves some sort of economic affair and that they would have to be profitable (that is to say, that this hospital, railway line or school was only a company, like all of God’s creatures, that would have to work like any other company and instead of just spending money would also have to transform it), then he would have caused a great deal of astonishment and sadness among the ladies and gentlemen of the bourgeoisie, devoted as they were to living a life of sophistication. But the point is that precisely this doctrine of Profitability is

proclaimed in our Welfare Society by people who do not feel the slightest compunction about it, and is given the greatest possible amount of publicity.

And that is why the general public, in those places where the old Public Services used to be, is now presented with modern offices in which the Standard of Profitability (and the corresponding faces and attitudes on the part of their employees) is governing, in fact (because words are facts ever since things have been reduced to ideas), in the same way as in any Private Company: these offices are no longer dealing with the subsidy of railway lines that are supposed to turn deserts into lively places and to make villages spring up in the middle of nowhere, but rather with different ways of cooperating with the Car and the Petrol Industry; not with cleaning the streets of the left-overs of metropolitan life, but rather with filling them up with signs saying “We are working for your future and apologize for any inconvenience”; not with maintaining a post service open to the public during as many days of the year and as many hours of the day as possible, and with an ever-increasing number of services and facilities, but rather with developing tedious schemes of competition with Private Transport Companies – in sum, they only serve the purpose of contributing to the transformation of Capital and of nurturing people’s Faith in the Future, while at the same time they keep messing them around in the present.

And that is why we must consistently proceed to raise the following question: What sort of role do Taxes really play in the Reign of Welfare?

Notes:

(1) This is an untranslatable pun.

9. On the falsification of taxes

Given the increasing identity of the State and Capital, it is easy to understand that in the course of Development the very concept of “taxes” has lost all the meaning that it may have had in more archaic forms of dominance. And yet the Welfare State continues to collect taxes, in fact it shows more determination and faith in doing so than ever before – or is it not true that one of God’s Executives told the newspapers the other day that a certain kind of fraud (we understand: on the taxpayer’s part and directed against the State, because the inverse kind of fraud is never mentioned by anyone) is an assault on Welfare Society? So it turns out that the concept of “taxes” must be brought into play with ever-increasing insistence precisely because it is getting more and more deceptive, as in fact is quite normal with the lies that are launched to sustain dominance.

But it is perfectly sufficient to cast a glance around ourselves and to realize that the Machinery of the State consists of many agencies, connected by an impenetrable network to the agencies of Capital and governed by the same Standard of Profitability as they (so that it will be impossible to find a single act of a Developed Government or a single Executive of the Treasury contravening their common Faith in the Future – and in the Future there is the Automobile, in the Future there is the Universal Computer Network, in the Future there is Mankind, in short), in order to realize that there is something that sounds pretty pointless in the whole topic of tax-collecting.

And this is because the very institution of tax-paying is a legacy of old-fashioned varieties of the State, when it was believed that the citizens or legal entities that were moving money on a large scale had an obligation (in just compensation for their sins, as it were) to pay the officers of benevolent Governments a certain part of their profits which in turn would be spent by these officers on certain non-profitmaking projects or institutions, supposed to answer the needs and desires of everyone, and especially of those – namely the poor – who did not move any capital at all.

But once we realize how the Welfare States handle their Money, and that the greatest part of it is being invested in the same kind of profitable transactions with future as Private Capital, then the pointlessness of the concept of “taxes” becomes all too obvious. No, sir, you will not be able to deny that when you declare your income and pay taxes to the Treasury, you are not doing anything remotely different from what you do when you order your bank to buy shares of this or the other Company of the Future, regardless of whether this company devotes itself to the Construction of Motorways or to the Proliferation of Computers, or whether you are buying shares of a prosperous bank (for what is the point, after all, in wasting one’s time on dealing with material merchandise?) or perhaps even of the Central Bank that administers the State’s own Capital and is in no respect different from any other bank, being in a position to offer you an equally advantageous investment: Don’t you see how they advertise their financial products in television, competing against all the other banks that are still pretending to be private?

“But don’t be so exaggerated”, some taxpayer or other may still be objecting: “Does it not remain true that the State is spending money on things like public health and education?” But without any need to investigate right now what this education is like or what this public health consists in, we may simply reply by asking our interlocutor why this fact is supposed to make any difference. Or is it not true that the Capital of Development is also working – and even more than ever before – to promote and to sponsor cultural and other charitable institutions, something that of course does not yield any immediate profit, but is nevertheless necessary (as its representatives are well aware) to sustain the Machinery?

The truth is that we ought to consider, in order to understand the whole fraud of tax-collecting, the way in which Money is split up under the conditions of Development into two essentially different

varieties, one of them of divine nature and the other one only human, and that we ought to explain that this distinction does not coincide with the distinction between “the State” and “the private sector”, but rather corresponds to the difference between Big Capital (owned by the State and the banks) and pocket money (owned by the taxpayers) – a question, however, that we shall have to postpone until the following chapter.

10. Divine money versus human money

Talking about the collection of taxes, we saw that there is a fundamental sham with respect to the relation between people and the State on which Development and Welfare are based: I mean the sham of making people believe (beginning with the politician and the economist themselves, who in fact are the same person) that the money that is taken out of the taxpayer's pocket contributes in some way or other (like in more archaic forms of dominance, like the money of Raquel & Vidas contributed to the funding of Cid the Campeador(1)) to the public funding that in turn is distributed as profit by the State to its subjects, at least to the extent to which the Lord deems it appropriate to answer the Majority's needs and demands.

That this tax revenue, instead of being spent on Public Services, is invested, under the conditions of Development, in profitable transactions (of money) in which the State participates on the same terms as the banks is a fact that we already discovered the other day; but the sham in all this is even more abstract and sublime (and the more abstract it is, the better it serves to constitute Reality): for we are not even supposed to understand that the money that is circulating among taxpayers is not at all of the same variety or nature as the money that the State and the banks are handling in the upper strata.

There is indeed a Mystery of Transubstantiation in the fact that the pocket money which is handed out to people in order to give them the illusion of being able to buy things that are not themselves money appears converted in these upper strata into Big Amounts of Money, with spectacular numbers ending in ten or twelve zeros or more, a variety of Money that moves by itself and is certainly not intended to buy anything apart from money (or in other words Credit, whether for the Big Companies or for the State, that makes no difference at all), so that those things that are quoted as merchandise in financial transactions get reduced to a mere pretext for the operation, and the names of these things become arbitrary and entirely interchangeable, with hydraulic presses being as easily replaced by Turkish cigarettes as anyone may replace an object on his chest of drawers.

It is all meant to conceal from us the elementary fact that our Welfare Society is entirely based on a marvellous discovery: That the Big or Divine Money, as soon as it moves a little bit, as soon as it changes its place from one bank account to another or from one moment in Time to another, becomes immediately productive (of more money, of course, or of what we may call, by its proper names, "Credit", "Future" or "Time"), on the only condition that in this process it can resort to an unshakeable Faith that supports it without any hesitation – a Faith that constitutes the very essence of Credit, of Future and of Time itself, being "Time" the genuine name of Developed Money.

It is by all means a miraculous operation that does not only imply that the product of Money cannot be anything else than Money (more or less disguised behind the name of some article), so that this Money can in other words only be reconverted into the ideal, bewitched and somnambulistic enjoyments characteristic of Welfare Society, and not into any genuine or tangible benefit for people, but also that this transformation of Money is an operation foreign to the pocket money that is handed out to people in coppers in order to give them the illusion of being able to buy something.

"But in this case", someone might object, "an immediate consequence would be that the collection of Taxes, the private contribution of money to State funding, is pretty pointless under the conditions of Welfare: for what need does the State have to collect my pocket money?" And indeed, it is true that the Welfare State has no need whatsoever to collect any Taxes, as it might survive as well devoting itself in a completely undisguised manner to the same kind of business as the Big Companies and the Banks, entities whose purpose it is to move money around in the upper strata.

It is simply untrue that the State is in need of tax raising, that "public funding is the result of what

we contribute among all of us” and that the Wealth of the State is made up of whatever the sum of all its subjects’ pocket money may amount to. But in spite of all this it is necessary to keep on collecting taxes because it is necessary to keep on messing the taxpayers around, given that precisely the act of messing people around is a primary necessity for Capital as well as for the State.

What is intended is that we all get converted into the Treasury, or in other words into countable beings and money(2). But this concerns already the specific constitution of Man within the Welfare State, an important topic to which we shall come back in what follows.

Notes:

(1) An historic and legendary Spanish nobleman of the 11th century who was immortalized, along with the literary characters “Raquel” and “Vidas”, in the epic poem “Cantar del Mío Cid”, composed around the year 1200.

(2) The Spanish “contables” is ambiguous between “countable beings” and “accountants”.

11. On the human being beloved by the banks and the State

We shall have to face the fact that the Bank, the Company and the State (three different persons who constitute, as we have seen, one true God) are under the conditions of Welfare all of them decidedly humanistic, and indeed much more humanistic than anyone ever before (so that, incidentally, the nonconformists had from now on better beware of being anything like humanists, for to be humanistic in these times is something like being a philosopher or a theosopher or what-have-you), given that all their interests are exclusively centred in Man: Man is in fact their only interest. The pun was not invented by me but by the banks themselves, or to be precise by a French bank that proclaimed some fifteen years ago (though using a different kind of pun, based on the ambiguity of the word “capital” which may also mean “of the utmost importance”) that “Your interest is capital for us” – an assertion that might be transformed into “Your capital is our interest”, or even, applying the formula of interest, into “Your capital is our capital”, something that is probably true enough, always arguing along the same lines as those High Street Shopkeepers who were claiming to be “Specialists in You”.

We must in other words find out what kind of human being this is, I mean the human being who the Companies, the State and the Banks are talking to and who they are so fond of.

It has to be a Personal Individual of course, that is to say a Person like you yourself, always provided that you are who you are and avoid incurring doubts or imprecisions. For this is the Individual that They intend to mass-produce, in order to obtain a Mass of Individuals in which all of them add up to a single Mass and yet each one is the one he is.

For the purpose of this mass-production the Welfare Regime has a great number of different procedures at hand, for example the Mass-Producing Media that are intended to form Masses of Individuals; but for the moment we shall focus our attention on those procedures that serve to give a rather more direct formation to Man by means of conditioning his use of money.

Indeed, as if it were no longer sufficient that Capital does its best to entertain our faculty of reason during half of our lives with things like buying a semi-detached house, a car or a television set, and with debates about sports competitions (or with taking part in them) and the purchase of tickets for the Monstrous Rock Singer’s performance in our local stadium (all of which is nothing but money given that it is made of numbers) – now the State rushes in to offer assistance, aiming to fill up the remaining part of our lives with comparative discussions among friends on what each of them gets back from the Treasury or deducts from his income, with the thrilling slave trade between the Executives of the Treasury and ourselves, with consulting a tax accountant about the tricks that may allow us, when it comes to presenting our Tax Declaration, to keep fraud within the implicitly permitted limits... – in sum, it is all going down the drain, I mean the whole of our lives.

It is revealing to compare two kinds of extremely successful radio programmes devoted to answering the listeners’ queries: the kind of programme where you may call to ask doctors or magicians about the complications, dangers and snares of your bodily mechanisms, and the one in which you can talk to Financial Technicians, with some old-age pensioner for instance inquiring: “And would you please tell me, Mr. So-and-so: Do I have to include the bicycle that I bought for my grandson in the taxable income or rather in the box of personal allowances?” – For this is the way in which Man receives his formation: by learning the terminology of the Treasury! “Through their mouths fish are killed and converted into fished fish.”(1)

The issue is not about cultivating in this new sort of Man any brutal, indistinct or uncontrollable selfishness, but rather about cultivating a selfishness entirely regulated and measured by money. This kind of domesticated financial selfishness is the one that Developed Democracy promotes in

each of the elements that are supposed to contribute to its Future Majorities.

The man who does not know how to talk about anything but money nor to think but in terms of money (regardless of whether he is discussing the cost of his liver operation or that of transferring a football player to his favourite team), this is the Man of the End of History (as the other guy liked to put it): the Man who is needed by Companies so they can form their Executives as well as their clients, and who the State is trying to supply to them in as perfect a shape as possible.

Will this Man possess money? But as to possessing money, how can anyone possess something as abstract and sublime as that, how can anyone possess numbers? No, no: This man IS money. But the operation of converting people into the Man who is money is something that will need a much more thorough examination...

Notes:

(1) This is a Spanish proverb, generally used in the sense of “silence is golden”.

12. On the universal prostitution

We have recently been discussing the question of how things are being sublimated under the conditions of Development and thus are being converted into money, and how the Persons, who after all are as real as the objects, act accordingly and convert themselves into money as well. In this context a brief investigation into the way in which the institution of prostitution (the oldest profession of the world, as people say on much more reasonable grounds than any Individual would be able to grasp) has spread and become universal in this world may not be entirely out of place.

For this purpose it will be appropriate to examine first of all the phenomenon of prostitution in the strict sense of the word, that is to say the prostitution of women. That the prostitution of women is the oldest institution of History is easy to understand once we remind ourselves that History itself begins with the subjection of women (and of their love and their hatred) to the Dominant Sex (and to what would continue to be the Dominant Sex in any historic society, as all of them are of course patriarchal and the Welfare Society is more patriarchal than any other, given that under the conditions of Welfare women's assimilation to Power and to the Dominant Sex is reaching its highest point), and that this subjection consists from the very beginning in the fact (already conjectured by Engels) that women constitute the most primitive form of money.

In a rather more advanced Culture (although it still was far from today's Development) such as Roman Antiquity, a poor youngster in love might well be scared to death when a brothel owner told him that the girl he loved had already been sold (for twenty Mines, which according to my calculations would be something like 750.000 of today's pesetas(1), being that, or up to three times this amount, what you normally had to pay in the Hellenistic world for a strong slave or for a beautiful female slave), confirming the transaction by pointing out to him that *'amicam tuam esse factam argenteam'* (Plautus, Ps 347), "your girlfriend has been turned into silver", or in other words that she had been converted into money.

And thus women have been bought and sold throughout the whole of History, be it by prostitution on an individual basis or by the institution of marriage, with or without dowries and wedding gifts (something that under the conditions of Development takes the form of an equal participation in the couple's joint economy, based on the husband's and the wife's income, so that the sexes are eventually brought onto equal terms by the egalitarian force of money, though of course in the sense of equalling the male ways and characteristics).

The fact that the prostitution of women, their devoting themselves to exchanging their charm and their favours for money, has acquired under the conditions of Welfare (regardless of whatever miserable traces there may be of more archaic types of prostitution) the reputation and the status that are well-known to all of us, so that the whores of a certain category may advertise themselves among the other professions in serious newspapers (for example as weekend companions for the Executives of Capital and the State) and good-looking girls may sell their charms without any preoccupation to the covers of illustrated journals or to whoever would like to make a video of them, let alone the possibility of organizing themselves in trade unions (at least from the grade of motorway whores onwards) – all this only confirms the essentially prostituted condition of Welfare Society as a whole (not so long ago I had occasion to write in *El País*(2) about these surveys in which people are asked if they would sell a night with their lover or spouse for a million Dollars) and may be taken as proof of the fact that Welfare Society is the culmination of the entire historical development.

But the Man of Welfare will not be able to promote the prostitution of his Welfare Women without being affected himself by this operation. And so what we are discovering in the analysis of the present chapter is this: that under the conditions of Welfare the scheme or pattern of prostitution

(“you have been turned into silver, my friend”, that is to say “you have sold yourself” or “you have converted yourself into money”) has been generalized and institutionalized by means of the banking system as well as by means of the tax administration as established by the Capital-State; and since it is no longer ignominious to talk about money or to sell oneself, but the trade in human beings is quite on the contrary the most respectable, forthright and authentic thing that anyone can do, we shall have to conclude that being money (and not having money) is the true foundation of the whole Welfare State.

But we must be careful to draw certain distinctions, for the issue is no longer about selling one’s skill or earning one’s money by work (that was what the institution of Work used to be like in more archaic forms of economy), but rather about selling oneself as a whole, about realizing one’s value in the Market, being literally (or rather numerically) one’s own Capital and Interest – as we shall explain at greater length in the following chapter.

Notes:

- (1) 4.500 Euros or 6.400 American Dollars at the exchange rates of August 2009.
- (2) A Spanish newspaper.

13. On the value of one's Personal Signature

We just discovered that under the conditions of Welfare the issue is no longer about having money or about gaining money by selling one's work, but rather about being money, about persons as well as objects being converted into money themselves.

In fact the basic idea of democracy that gave rise to the whole development of this world, the idea of counting a Person's vote as a unit which by means of the operation of adding them up is supposed to yield a numeric Majority of the same value as the whole (leaving the remaining votes aside as a negligible quantity) – this idea already evidences the assumption that people are just objects of accountancy(1). But all that which can be counted is essentially just Time, and even Money is, once it is fully developed, Time (or Credit or Future), and this is why the quantification of Persons, their being converted into numbers, implies treating them as if they were some kind of Money.

Now given that the faith in Man (that is to say, in the Personal Individual as we described it the other day) is the fundamental Faith of Development (a reason that is good enough for nonconformists to avoid subscribing to this Faith), it is coherent and only to be expected that the pure Credit into which Money has been transformed under the conditions of Development is no longer guaranteed by any genuine riches, nor by any useful and tangible products, but rather by people's Name or Signature. These Names and Signatures are the only foundation that value is based on, in the Markets and the banks as well as in the political games that the Combined Persons of the Welfare States are devoting themselves to.

Regardless of whether we consider the accepted signature on a personal cheque, the transactions of Brand Names among big Companies and Banks, or the cultivation of Images, for example of Spain's Image among the Developed Countries (an image that immediately knows to be converted into Credit), we only keep accumulating evidence to the effect that under the conditions of Welfare the value of Money cannot possibly consist in anything but Names and Signatures.

For how is credit obtained, how does one succeed in converting one's Name into the basis of value? Of course by selling oneself: only by selling himself can a Person be converted into money, for the same reason as a Person can only obtain Power by obeying Power. Something we can no longer rely on is that Credit is based on perceptible riches, on assets that are useful to people, on one's own products, on the products made by Companies (including the Banks, which are having no problem in producing nothing at all) or on the Credit of States (never mind the gold or whatever they may have in their strongrooms), because at some stage these used to be (in the best case) the foundations of Credit under previous Regimes (before things and persons got converted into money), but now under the Welfare Regime it is certainly no longer so.

What is now playing the essential role in the acquisition of Credit is the marketing(2) of the Name – the supreme trade of Development, which is the trade of increasing sales. This kind of marketing is what the manager(3) of any starlet will devote most of his time to, being perfectly aware that someone's voice or his vocal chords or his skills are at best a good starting point, while the future capitalization of them will rather depend on the management of his Name and his Personal Image (and above all on their being shown on television, for only those who appear on television exist); but it is also what an enormous part of the States' budgets is spent on: promoting for instance the Image of Spain. Credit breeds Credit (and "emptiness breeds emptiness", as perhaps some malicious person might gloss).

And why should we make efforts to look for further evidence when the most spectacular case in point is to be found in the realm of Culture, given that Culture is the most important office of

Developed States? We only have to examine, for example, what the value of a painting consists in: Does anyone remember if the Artist had really some kind of special skill (not to mention the word “genius”) when his Promotional Agents began to publicize him and to create him a Name? To the extent to which their promotional operation has been successful, it will be the artist’s signature alone that will guarantee the value of his paintings. And once the artist has sold himself and his signature has acquired the credit that is due, this signature by itself will take charge of increasing his credit and the artist’s production will become a mere pretext for the pieces of nonsense that the art critics may publish, or rather the marketing agents of Culture, given that they get compensated by Culture and receive their due part of monetary Credit as well.

At any rate, the case of the arts is nothing particular, but just another piece of evidence (though in fact so extremely obvious that I do not understand how anyone can raise doubts about my analysis in the face of the aforementioned effects of signing a painting) whose implications ought to be generalized with respect to all existing forms of trade with the Person. But however that may be, it appears reasonable to discuss not only the case of the artist, but also the cases of other kinds of public personalities.

Notes:

- (1) The Spanish “contabilidad” is ambiguous between “countable” and “objects of accountancy”.
- (2) This word is in English.
- (3) This word is in English.

14. On the Executives' inevitable modesty

Talking about the (pecuniary) value of the Person under the conditions of Development and having mentioned the most spectacular cases of duly promoted Starlets and Artists, we ought to consider now the cases of other Public Personalities who, being equipped with their own image (especially with their television image) and their publicly rated Proper Name, may also enjoy their Credit and convert themselves into money: the Executives of Capital and the State, the Managers of Big Companies and the Directors of Banks (generally the same individuals) – not to forget the Politicians of Development, who had better not be surprised to find themselves included in our list, given that under the conditions of Development, Capital and the State have merged into the same phenomenon, as we have seen, and that there is no longer any Politics apart from Economics, or any other Idea apart from that of Money.

(I would really like to insert a digression in exemption of the countless friends of mine who got entangled in all this because they were clinging to the ideas of previous Regimes and then found out what we have explained in these pages, spending all their energy on conflicts that they did not know to resolve and that even made them appear more likeable, as happens to anyone who suffers the contradictions of real life – but then there is little we can do for them, given that we are in a hurry and the most important thing is to draw general conclusions.)

To continue with our investigation, if we conceded for the sake of argument that there have been other periods in History (different from this epoch of ours which contains all previous epochs without being any epoch itself), then the comparison with the Great Personalities of those times, I mean with the Fords, the Rothschilds and the Roosevelts (or even with the Hitlers and the Stalins, for what they are worth), Personalities who are presented so vividly to us by History, so impregnated with character, with colour, with some halo of glory or atrocity, would serve to reveal with still more emphasis if possible the surprising paleness that distinguishes the Executives of Development – Executives who appear to be in need of an ever-increasing mediocrity in order to be on all accounts interchangeable without losses to the Regime, so that the maintenance of their Image and their Name requires more and more expenditure of radiophonic publicity, more and more exaltation in the newspaper headlines and, above all, more and more television coverage, given that this is the only way in which the public can be made to retain their Names and their Effigies for a day or for a couple of years, and in which it can be made to believe that there are really a number of Persons who rule the fate of the States, the Companies and the Banks; a belief by which the people in turn are converted into a Mass of Persons.

It is crucial to examine this apparently paradoxical condition of modesty that the Executives of Development have to display in order to sell themselves successfully and to be acclaimed and promoted to the heights of their Name and Credit.

However, it will not take us too much time to understand this, once we remind ourselves that in Welfare Society the act of climbing the Pyramid of Power is strictly identical with the act of selling oneself. However, in order to be able to sell oneself one must find a person who is willing to buy, but how does one manage to instil a desire to buy one into the State or Capital? Well, given that the State and Capital are made of Credit and based on Faith, the necessary condition will be the condition of this Faith: For as soon as one embraces firmly the Faith, one has already acquired Credit and is beginning to climb. The Lord knows well how to recognize the capacity for having Faith in the candidates who aspire to be Executives; and although he sometimes selects them among the clever candidates (and at other times among the dull ones: for there are many occasions when it is better for the Executives to be clumsy, as things always depend on the particular place and moment), what the Lord cannot dispense with is that they must believe and have Faith.

But now we must take into account that Faith is just the opposite of intelligence: it provides us at most with certain computational skills or some strategic capacity of classification, forecasting and planning; but then, the act of classifying implies denying that there is an infinite number of possibilities and the act of anticipating things presupposes preventing any negative or creative action once the course of future events is taken for granted (as, indeed, Credit demands); and this is how Faith ends up killing our judgment.

It is true that intelligence is not to be found in any Person: for there is nothing intelligent apart from language itself (as we can read in the book of Heraclitus) – nothing apart from the common and ordinary language, that is, as opposed to the politicians' and bankers' jargons, not to mention the peculiar jargons of Philosophy and of other literary branches of Culture.

So this is why it is so important for the life of the people and for the rebellion that always continues to be possible to refuse to learn the Executives' jargon and to refuse, for example, to learn the terminology of tax-collecting; and why it is crucial to refuse to learn even so much as the Executives' Names (not even to insult them in graffiti), and to refuse to see their images on the screen.

Refusing to believe is the most important thing we must do – and thus be in a position to tell the Executives of Power and Money that we do not want their vocabulary, their Names and their symbols, and that in fact we have no idea what they may mean – for we speak a different language that no-one can manipulate, the language of anybody who will always know how to say at least one thing, namely “NO”.

15. On there being no escape from Money unless we get rid of the Person

Talking about the different kinds of Celebrities, we have seen that their ostentation of Faith in the Regime (their believing in it and their consequential opinions and decisions that are never the result of giving free rein to thought) is the necessary condition of any success they may have in selling themselves and in convincing the State or the Banks (there is not much of a difference) to buy them as Executives, as well as in acquiring the corresponding Credit, in converting themselves into money and (given that Power is the same thing as Money under the conditions of Welfare) in obtaining Power – though this is a kind of Power that only enables them to do what has been ordered, or that which has already been done.

And this is why the people (I mean that which endures below the level of Public Personalities), when it aspires to get rid of the Power that is now oppressing it and is trying to reduce it to a Mass of Individuals (this impenitent aspiration which corresponds, from the point of view of the Welfare State, to what in former times was called “the revolution”, albeit in a rather confused and treacherous manner), must take courage from the only popular virtue – I mean the virtue of not believing (as it is only by means of not believing that “the people” may distinguish itself and remain opposed to the Mass of Individuals, characterized by their solidarity with respect to one common Faith), and especially the virtue of refusing to believe that there is any real Person who moves Money and directs Power consciously and on purpose, and who is responsible for the administration of death to the people.

It is quite the opposite: The people must learn to survive along the lines of what Christ said on the cross: “They do not know what they do”; and it must know to apply these words the more rigorously the higher up in the Pyramid a Person has risen, given that the necessary condition of climbing it is the Faith, as we have seen, and a Person must be supposed to have the more Faith the higher his position in the Pyramid. For the same reason the people must not commit the mistake of imputing the cruelties of Development to any sort of Machiavellian personalities: Development is not a matter of Tom, Dick and Harry, who are interchangeable without there being any difference between them, but rather a matter of the State and Capital.

On the other hand, following a certain kind of Socratic reasoning that always remains topical, we must remind ourselves that the condition of ignorance with respect to what we are doing is common to all of us and that in fact it is everybody’s predicament (for the only really intelligent thing is language itself, given that it is common to all of us and cannot be owned by anyone), while of course there is a radical difference, even so, between those who (on top of being ignorant) claim to know what they are doing and thus end up obeying Capital and the State, and those (like ourselves) who neither know what they are doing nor pretend that they know it, but rather feel their way without pursuing any plan or project (motivated, not by any kind of Future, but by the longing for what occurred before History, at least as far as we can remember it), while making the attempt to discover paths that are not yet marked out, to do away with the Power of Capital and to give free rein to the infinite number of opportunities that are provided by life and by reason.

But this will presuppose that we give up the Person in the sense of the “competent subject”, in order to do something different from what has already been done, something different from earning Money and confirming the legitimacy of its Reign.

And that is why we are not going to have any of these ideas of Plato’s, who imagines (as do his numerous and confused followers) a government made up of Wise Men or Philosophers: As if that were not precisely what we have here in this Welfare Society, where the Leading Executives of docile Economy and obedient Physics like to perform as Philosophers – I mean those who know it all and are perfectly convinced to know it, and who even claim themselves from time to time that

they have their philosophy!

But neither are we having any of these other fantasy worlds, based on a faith in the association and solidarity among the oppressed, who would then seize Power and set themselves up in a sort of Enlightened Democracy: for this is just what has given rise to the present Ideal of Development, aiming to replace all of us (including what remains of the people in each one below the level of his Personality) by a Majority of Individuals who each of them vote conscientiously and according to their free will, and who believe they know what they get for selling themselves.

No plan or project that relies on the Person will ever be in a position to really confront the Regime that we are suffering. But for us, being Persons ourselves, this is (of course) so hard to understand that we shall still have to devote another chapter to these matters.

16. From Trade Unions to psychoanalysis

We have seen that there is no compatibility at all between the aspiration to do away with Power (the Power of Money) and the attitude of respecting or having Faith in the Person, given that the Person itself has been converted into money.

If we needed another stunning piece of evidence to confirm this, it would be sufficient to have a look at the Trade Unions – for the need to increase their contingents of affiliated workers (in due obedience to the democratic law of Majorities) forces the leaders of the Trade Unions first of all to pay due respect to the Working Person's Rights (and to avoid scaring him as a Working Person), an obligation which in turn compels them to respect the concept of "work" itself (and even to honour it by singing the Hymn of Work in harmony with the employers), and immediately afterwards the concept of "Money"; to be brief, it turns out that under the conditions of Development the Trade Unions are reduced to agencies of cooperation, helping the Banks and the State with their task of sustaining Capital – a task that consists in Welfare Society (where Work is no longer intended to be anything but the production of useless articles and the creation of needs) in keeping Capital moving, that is to say, in regulating the race of prices and salaries, in watching and bargaining over the unemployment rate, in keeping the accounts of the creation of new Jobs, in short, in playing a game that is necessary for Money itself, as well as for the State and for the Worker's personal statute, but not for anyone else.

There is no doubt that it is "very humane" to care first of all for the (employed or unemployed) workers' needs (even though they may be artificial and fabricated), something that, apart from the Trade Unions, is also done, in their own way, by Charitable Organizations, and that almost all of us will do when someone asks us for a coin in the streets of Welfare and we find it more convenient to give him the coin than to stop and discuss his particular case. But what is indeed inexcusable is to confuse all this with the rebellion against Money, given that it will of course contribute to confirming the idea that everything is at bottom a question of money.

No: Given the schizophrenic frame of mind that the Person is normally suffering under the conditions of Development, the only reasonable thing we can do in these circumstances is to follow the advice of the Gospel: "May your left hand not know what your right hand is doing" (and vice versa).

For what can be in real contradiction with the dominance of the Capital-State are by no means the Persons or the Groups of Persons and their mutual Personal Solidarity: the only thing that can really contradict it is that which remains alive of the impersonal and uncountable people, that which survives below the level of these Persons who believe they know what they are doing and who are convinced of the future to which they have been condemned; that which remains alive and keeps on reasoning in all of us, given that "all of us" is precisely the opposite of the Majority.

And of course we must add that which remains alive in each one of us in contradiction with his own Person, for this is a contradiction that has been surmounted only by the ideal subject of the Capital-State: I mean the dead one. And this is why it is perfectly reasonable and not in the least surprising that in this Analysis of Welfare Society we have had to arrive at some sort of psychoanalysis of the Mass (of Persons) which implicitly contains a psychoanalysis of each of its members.

For psychoanalysis (or literally "the dissolution of the soul") is an invention that originated in the same struggle for liberation, when it was first conceived by Freud (in contradiction with himself), even though it may later have succumbed to the notorious fate of being converted (the same as the Trade Unions) into an industry of reinstatement into Law and Order.

But its original purpose was indeed to discover in the Masses what we may call their superficial subconscious, and to set free what is not individual (or economic) in each of us, or what is different from all our individual characteristics.

However, I am sure that this analysis is already generating difficulties and doubts on the part of its readers, as to how we ought to imagine the collapse of this Welfare Society, and how there can be human life and reason without the constitution of Persons – so natural and basic a thing has Money become in our lives! And that is why we shall have to be so compassionate as to devote the remaining chapters of our analysis to this kind of difficulties that no doubt many readers will be personally worried about.

17. On how easy it is to knock down the Regime

While pursuing this analysis of the Regime of Development and revealing the lies and fallacies that it is based on, it appears that the course of our analysis itself forces us to think of what there might be instead of what there is, that is to say, to think about the collapse of this Regime and about what people's lives would be like if they were not governed by Money; and we must acknowledge that we find it extremely difficult to imagine anything of the kind and to get rid of the fear that the mere idea of abandoning the Regime of Money (which, like all Regimes, pretends to be the only possible one) instils into the souls of the Mass, as well as into the soul of each one of us.

But before we try to shake off this fear and to examine the obstacles that we find in doing so, we must realize how easy it is to knock down this Regime.

Its strength is precisely the weakest point of it. For its strength is the strength of emptiness, as we have seen: Money itself has had to become increasingly abstract and sublime in order to achieve the most powerful domination of the people, and while the people's pocket money preserves a rather archaic nature and the illusion of having some worth in terms of things that are not themselves money, the divine and genuine Money, that which belongs to the Big Company, the Bank or the State, is lacking all this and proving to have a worth only in terms of Credit, or in terms of the conviction that the Future belongs to Them, that They will be able to keep on playing forever with Time, with the Signatures and with the Names that Credit adheres to.

We live, in other words, in the Reign of Faith; and the historic dynamics of previous Religions, constantly forced to turn their Gods increasingly abstract and sublime in order to legitimate their dominance, has only been reinforced under the conditions of Development. And this is why, for the collapse of this last Religion (which is the Economic Religion or the Ideal of Money), it will be entirely sufficient that a slight suspicion of the vacuity of this Faith gets disseminated to some extent: that people arrive at the discovery of God's emptiness, a bit like what happened according to Tacitus (Hist V 9) when Pompey, having defeated the Jews, entered *iure uictoriae*(1) for the first time the Temple of Jerusalem; *inde uulgatum nulla intus deum effigie uacuam sedem et inania arcana*, "whereupon it was made public that, being no image of any God to be found in the interior, the place was actually empty and the mysteries were vain" – something that we might gloss by saying that "the mysteries were made of emptiness".

In other words, there is no need to resort to bombs or machine guns in order to pull down the feeble walls of Banks and Ministries (quite the opposite, they would probably be counter-productive as they would only contribute to the retaliatory construction of new pointless buildings replete with concrete, steel and fibre-glass gadgets, as well as to the creation of a few thousand Jobs), nor do we have to look out for gangs of extraterrestrial beings to help us defeat this Empire, as the Capital-State itself tries to suggest to the minds of the Masses, making use of a Science that it has at its service, to imbue them with fantastic ideas of a strangeness that proves at the same time threatening and familiar. If you want yet another historic comparison, be assured that not even the collapse of the Roman Empire was so much a result of the Northern Barbarians' In-Rush, people who would have done very little if the Roman Faith itself had not previously lost credit and influence among the population and its political leaders.

It is perfectly sufficient that a rumour of doubt or a breeze of suspicion spreads to a certain extent in these offices or in others, that it reaches these heights of Corporate Power or others (are the frightening ups and downs of the industrial Markets and the Stock Exchange, caused by some insignificant piece of news or by a couple of insubstantial images that the Media have disclosed, not a portent of something worse?), in order to certify the discovery of the Money-God's vacuity, to make him crack and disintegrate rapidly, and to demolish an Empire entirely based on Credit and

Faith. And this breakdown of the Faith in Money will entail a loss of Faith in the Science of Reality, given that this Science was also at the service of Money.

“But, for sure, what will happen to all those”, will some of the more sensible readers observe, “who were never that much convinced of the Faith in Money, while the collapse of Reality is taking place? For while the emptiness of Money is being discovered and while they are saying “NO” to this Faith, these mouths will at any rate have to eat bread, will they not?” – Yes indeed, they will, and this is a question that we shall examine immediately.

Notes:

(1) “By the law of victory”.

18. What can replace the stimulus of money?

Yes, we shall have to admit first of all (unless we want to fall prey ourselves to wishful thinking) that although money has reached the utmost abstraction and sublimity under the conditions of Development, although it is no longer good for buying anything but money and although it has turned into a complete illusion, the truth is that if things work out as well as they do in our Welfare Society, it is all the same only thanks to this illusion of Money.

But this of course is only to be expected. For we have already seen that in this kind of society Man (or the Individual) Himself has been converted into money, and as soon as this happens, nothing apart from the expectation of earning more money, or of converting himself into more money, can move him to embark on any project or design or on any enterprise whatsoever: once all his interest in tangible things (and in tangible people) is cancelled, his ambition for the Good can no longer take any other form than that of numbers in a bank account, or that of the amounts that his personal bank account, or his company's bank account or that of the State (this is all of it the same thing) may gain, numerically speaking, by means and under the pretext of handling objects and people.

That this is the only kind of engine that keeps the world moving is a fact that is readily admitted by God's Executives, regardless of whether they devote themselves to calculating (and discussing with the Trade Unions) the incentives that are supposed to motivate the workers to continue producing useless things, or whether they take part, as politicians, in these stupid and convenient discussions on whether handing the management of companies over to Private Capital would be the proper thing to do, given that the stimulus of money will make them work more efficiently, or whether the State Administration ought to imitate Private Companies, in the reverse order (but in fact it comes all to the same), with respect to the application of the Standard of Profitability, stimulating its own Executives (with money, of course) so as to make them become as interested as the Executives of Capital in the promotion of whatever operation it may be.

And those who (like ourselves) are not Executives (or are Executives, but bad ones) will have to admit as well that the only thing that can motivate Man in this Welfare Regime is the Ideal, the Faith, or in other words Money: only thanks to Money do we have this abundance (even though it may well be an abundance of substitutes), only thanks to Money does the World remain in gear (even though it may be operating in a fallacious manner); and if we dream of the collapse of this Regime we cannot avoid asking if there is anything else that may serve as the world's engine (given that we are realistic and reasonable dreamers), even though it may not be as efficient as Money, once the Faith in Money has vanished.

And without any intention of resorting to the Majority of course (as the Majority is known to be agglutinated by the Faith) we ask ourselves if there is nothing here in these lower strata that may serve this purpose and confirms to us in a low voice that Money is not everything – a problem on which the examination of certain schemes or intrigues that the ruling Ideal has prepared for its populations may indeed shed a certain amount of light.

It is well-known that the schemes of Development are all about people's advancing to the Tertiary Sector. The development of a State is measured in terms of the proportion between the three sectors: the Primary Sector, in which many people devote themselves to farming, is the lowest and less prestigious sector from the Ideal's point of view; the Secondary Sector, in which people work on the transformation of raw materials into industrial or "human" objects, was the genuine Labour in the times of Marx's world vision and enjoys an intermediate dignity under the present conditions of Development; but the really excellent thing for Development is the Tertiary Sector, the Sector in which people devote themselves to producing nothing at all, and the State that has placed the greatest part of its population in this Sector will be the most developed State. The day on which we

shall all of us be Bank employees devoting ourselves to the exchange of numbers (in Samuel Butler's wise Utopia of EREWHON⁽¹⁾ people go to the "Musical Banks" to do something almost as ethereal as that) – that will be the day on which the Ideal has come true.

"But how can something like that sustain itself?", we ask ourselves, being only vulgar sons of the ordinary. "By magic perhaps?" – And we suspect that it does not sustain itself by magic, that below the Ideal and below Money there is Mother Earth continuing to give bread and producing the tangible goods that all the ideals and follies of her sons are fed on. There is something like that here in these lower strata. And in what other place can disillusioned people look for relief if not on the earth or in what is below?

But this is nothing more than a rough idea: how it may be turned into a strategy to replace the stimulus of Money is a problem that we shall discuss in what follows.

Notes:

(1) Published anonymously in 1872.

19. On machines and the criterion of utility

The Empire of Development has to promote the creation of needs as an industry of primary importance to keep the illusion alive that Money serves to satisfy these needs. Refusing to participate in the creation of needs is something that people (like ourselves) can only do (to the extent to which something of the people remains alive among all of us, as well as in each one of us) because they feel that there are, not so much “natural necessities” or needs, but rather tangible and perceptible goods that do not merely consist in ideas and have not been manufactured and sold for Money.

This is why we can still resort to a sense of usefulness, uninfluenced by Money, in the midst of the whole frenzy of numbers by which we are being assaulted in Development, and can distinguish in spite of everything between that which serves to buy, to keep or to sell Money and that which is good for other purposes; without forgetting that the Ideal of Development is at bottom nothing more than the perfection of a lie on which the whole of History is based, ever since there are Laws and an Administration of Justice: I mean the lie that would have us believe that property is compatible with use (or with usefulness), and even that use is to be subordinated to property. Here in these lower strata we cannot quite believe that, for we are all too familiar with the sweet taste of the fruit from our neighbour's garden (as even the gentleman Garcilaso observed⁽¹⁾), and claim that using something is not at all the same as having it: either you have the fruit or you enjoy it, but not both things at once.

It is in virtue of this sense of uncommercialized usefulness, or in other words in virtue of a common sense, that we can distinguish, for instance, between owning some means of transport (such as the Personal Car, an expression of the Democratic Ideal) and getting on a means of transport that happens to be passing by in order to arrive wherever we wanted to go. Here originates the struggle against the Personal Car (with its retinue of buses, coaches and lorries), drawing on the usefulness of other means of transport such as trains and trams and all those that are not at the service of Development because they resist Private Property.

We are talking about the use of machines. We are happy to sing the praises of the useful devices that were invented by our grandfathers (and the fact that our grandfathers invented and promoted them as a result of the ugliest selfishness and their worst bourgeois interests in exploiting others is something we do not give a damn about, as long the devices themselves are useful for people – fortunately men know not what they do), the devices that eventually did away with Labour and its fallacious necessity.

One of the most notable idiocies that the Executives of Development like to throw in the faces of all those who call their Regime into question is that by rejecting this Regime we would also renounce the force of mechanic devices and lose the advantages of Progress; and then they behave as if they were defending these machines, or even as if they themselves had invented them – while in fact they have rather spoilt them as much as they could, converting the usefulness of many of the contraptions that were invented by our progressive grandfathers into uselessness, above all by the addition of new gadgets that do not answer any kind of necessity or desire on the people's part but only serve to increase sales figures.

They have completely ruined the utility of the machines that had been designed to show that Labour, Jehova's damnation, was a phantom and that thanks to the mechanical slaves it was no longer necessary for people to do any menial work – or at any rate very little of it, almost nothing at all: and what remained of it gave rise to a concept that is as popular as few other concepts and an expression of elementary common sense – I mean the idea of shift working or working in turns, repugnant to the Executives of Development who, on the contrary, are obsessed with devoting

themselves to the creation of Jobs.

To sum up, the issue is not about renouncing machines but about using them: using them not for selling them, buying them or just having them, but for something else. A steady, basic and vulgar criterion of utility is all we need in order to distinguish between the devices that serve to make labour obsolete and to have a good time, and those that serve to create new needs, to make people work unnecessarily, to entertain the Masses or to induce Individuals to do physical exercises in their spare time – in brief, to keep Capital moving and to maintain the institutions of the State.

Our common sense and our criterion of utility are not at the service of any of the aims and purposes pursued by the State and Capital: and this is why they are good for whatever remains alive of ordinary folks – an antagonism that we should still like to explore a bit more closely...

Notes:

(1) Garcilaso de la Vega, one of the greatest poets of Spanish language, was born around 1501 and died in 1536.

20. On preserving what proved to be good

We have described the hostility without mercy between the criterion of utility, one of the people's weapons, and the State of Development that can only keep afloat by creating new needs, by spreading useless products (products that only serve to promote their own sale) and by enforcing people's subordination to the Law of Labour, notwithstanding the fact that this Labour is unnecessary for people and only useful for the transformation of Capital – a pointless Labour, in fact (the empty hours in terms of which we measure its duration are the same hours that we spend buying its useless products: Time I sell you, Time you pay me – this is what has become of the “added value”), which because of its pointlessness requires in turn a pointless recreation, quantifiable in terms of the same units of Time that are used to measure the amounts of pointless Labour.

However, nothing ever reaches the total perfection of the Future Ideal, and it is evident that even in Welfare Society, in the midst of all the foolish bustle that predominates in it, there are a couple of good things as well whose production cannot be entirely suppressed or avoided – things that really answer the desires of the public without any previous creation of this vacuum that is meant to induce people to buy them. And perhaps we may trust that the good sense and the wisdom about those things that were good and useful before they got converted into money and personal property will revive to the same extent to which the Ideal of Money decays and the pecuniary stimulus loses its impact.

In other words, there is no need to lose one's head crediting Development with all the goods that we enjoy in its Reign, nor to think that once this Welfare Society perishes all the useful and pleasant things (for pleasure and utility are the one and same, in spite of what is taught in the Schools of the Capital-State) that human skill and creativeness could not help producing even in the midst of all this pointless bustle will necessarily be lost.

Just the opposite: The golden rule that we learn from common sense and perceptual selfishness (I mean as opposed to the abstract and financial selfishness: the desire to use and not the obsession to possess) consists in making distinctions within this enormous rubbish dump that the world has been converted into by the Capital-State (as the production of rubbish or of things without any utility is the most important production of Development), in identifying among all these things those which are tangible and desirable, and in preventing that a single one of the attractions and amenities that the old Bourgeoisie had to invent and to produce (for their own purposes, of course, but all the same) and that the Welfare Society itself must continue to produce, may get lost, regardless of the disorders that may occur during its eventual collapse.

For the issue is not about putting the whole population on equal terms with respect to their being fed and contented with substitutes, as that is precisely the Ideal pursued by Development when it distributes a supermarket of miseries among its millions of subjects, just as if there were a stock(1) to be administered with equity from the higher strata (while in fact what is quantifiable and administrable is just Money – true wealth is not quantifiable); rather it is, on the contrary, about making the royal palaces accessible to everyone and inviting all of us to the bourgeois banquets – or in other words, about making all kinds of luxury goods (but “luxury” with respect to their use, not with respect to their possession) and all the amenities and attractions available to anyone. And in this sense, when we praised, for example, the railway, it was among other things because “the train makes all of us free and converts us into gentlemen”, whereas “the car converts us all into drivers and engineers”(2).

The issue is about taking advantage without paying (a very simple strategy): Making good use of all the inventions and contraptions that Capital could not help developing during its own Development

in order to increase the enjoyment of life and to improve the life of reason, but of course without paying anything for them, neither in terms of Labour (I mean Labour in the strict sense of the word, not inventing and producing useless new things, for that is not Labour) or in terms of the covert replacement of genuine things by substitutes, nor by converting one's soul into money, nor – and this is the most important item on the list – by subscribing to the Faith that the God of Development is trying to impose on his parishioners (beginning with the Tax Declaration and ending with this Heaven that we get offered by a corrupt and deceptive Science).

Is that kind of tactic possible at all? Mind you, for Spain, for the United States, for Catalonia or for Europe it is not even remotely possible, that much is clear. But does this mean that it is impossible in itself? That is a question that we shall have to examine in what follows.

Notes:

(1) This word is in English.

(2) These two passages are placed in inverted commas, but there is no indication as to whether they are quotations.

21. Who the heck needs the States?

It is fairly clear that the things that heart and reason are demanding – that Money may disappear from the face of the Earth, that the use and the appreciation of tangible things may replace the dominance of the Ideal that aims to destroy them, that our hands and minds, instead of being employed in producing what has already been done, may recover the freedom to do whatever people's desire and reason solicit of them, that people, instead of having to comply with a fatal Future that has been marked out from Above, may be free to find their own ways, and that people may live on Earth and not Masses of Individuals, quantifiable in terms of units and each unit being established in terms of pure money – it is fairly clear that all this is completely impossible as long as we have to put up with ideas such as “Japan”, “Germany” or (for what it is worth) “Galicia” or “Tanzania”, always created to the image of the same idea of the State, and as long as people believe that those desirable transformations will still have to affect the territories or populations that are dominated by this kind of ideas – for that would be entirely pointless, of course.

The collapse of Capital will entail the collapse of the State, and in Welfare Society this will be even more inevitable than in any other imaginable situation – something that shows how far the union and identification of Capital and the State has advanced under the conditions of Development.

Who the heck needs the existence of France? France itself of course needs it, but not the people who live on the left bank of the Rhine or on the Northern side of the Pyrenees; though the Individual in front of his television set or the Mass of Individuals in some stadium do perhaps need it so as to be able to shout, deeply moved, “We have broken the record!” or “We have won the competition!” whenever the athlete covered in the colours of their national flag (although he is probably imported from Zanzibar) sets up a new record. But this is not the people; this is France.

We must remind ourselves once more that the desire that Money may disappear and that life and common sense may again rule among us has nothing impossible or Utopian about it: for it would be sufficient if people lived in communities small enough to enable their members to form their own government and administration without any kind of democratic votes or representative delegations, simply adding a few offices and networks to facilitate communication between the different communities of the world (though only those offices and networks that are really necessary), in order to have the fulfilment of our desires at hand, more or less as it was stated in the “Manifest of the Antinationalist Commune of Zamora”(1), a commune that enjoys the same good health as the people in general: it will never have to die, given that it does not exist.

Even so, we have to admit that the possibility that Spain, Iraq or Indonesia might simply disappear is extremely frightening to people's souls: So much innocent blood has been shed in the course of History to sustain these ideas (in rather old-fashioned forms of dominance by sacrificing great numbers of human beings, and the younger and more flourishing they were, the better, because these are the most dangerous ones when “the cries of patriotism are buzzing” everywhere until “there is no piece of land without a Spanish grave”(2); and in more advanced forms of the same thing by sentencing the registered population to a death within lifetime, making them keep still in front of their television set, in traffic jams caused by their personal cars or in the deafening noise of the disco or the stadium), and the sheer amount of death that these Ideas have exacted simply because that was the cost of sustaining them cannot leave our conscience unaffected. But will this human sacrifice be sufficient to maintain the same machinery that has put all this into practice? It appears much more reasonable to suppose that it will induce people to start talking like this: “The Roman Empire has fulfilled its purpose, as indeed has the Kingdom of Castile and that of Aragon, not to mention the British Empire and the Independence of Venezuela, in order to get us to where we are. That is how it had to occur, given that it was so. But all this is only History, whereas we ourselves are not in History but rather in a particular situation, which is this one”.

And what is more: As the Administration was established on the basis of this idea of the States, we must realize that those who want to revert it to the simple administration of communities by their own members will have to face enormous upheavals and all sorts of obstacles – for after all we do not want any more “Free Greenlands” nor “Great and United Europes”, all of them reproducing, nourishing and expanding the State Administration under different names, no more Governments lurking in the Centre or in the Upper Strata, but a minimal government from below and according to the rule “the less the better”.

This change is hard, no doubt, but on the other hand: What a relief to think of the enormous saving that it entails in terms of time, of energy, of unnecessary lies! – Just to imagine that we no longer need to sustain these Ideals, neither the Future of Development nor the Image of Spain; just to figure out (in a low voice) how much bureaucracy, Executives’ salaries, computer output, international conferences, takeoffs and landings and production of television news items could be saved! – As far as ordinary people (like ourselves) are concerned, our mouths are watering.

Notes:

(1) The author is referring to his book “Manifiesto de la Comuna Antinacionalista Zamorana”, published in 1987.

(2) These are quotations from a patriotic ode by Bernardo López García, a Spanish poet who was born in 1840 and died in 1870.

22. On snakes and doves

As the collapse of Capital is brought about by people's fondness for the things that are destroyed by Capital in exchange for money, in the same way the collapse of the States is nourished by the sense of community that They are trying to crush and to replace by the Sum of Individuals and the democratic vote. And we must by no means underrate the force of Capital and the State, which is terrifying because it is motivated and ruled by the Ideal, by Numbers and by Faith, while the force to reject and to defeat it, the force of the people, has none of these weapons at its command and may only count on a dubious invocation of sense-perception, on a faculty of reason ignorant of any idea and on a certain longing for life. So therefore, taking the difference between these two forces into account, any amount of cunning will hardly be sufficient to keep people's sense of community alive.

Under now outdated forms of dominance, the task of keeping the sense of community alive implied facing violent repression, weapons in the hands of executioners and recruiting officers, local despotism and the Inquisition, but in the Welfare Society it means above all defending the sense of community against the much more sophisticated strategy of assimilation. Any kind of sentiment may be converted into an idea of itself and thus be in for a sleight of hand. For instance, the innocent defence of "Nature" against the destruction occasioned by Capital and the State can by means of this procedure be turned into "Ecology" and be absorbed into the mechanisms of Development; and the well-meant attempt to liberate us from the repression of the Soul (which however is precisely where the Soul originates) ends up easily in licentiousness or in drug-addiction, and thus turns out to be useful for Capital, contributing to the lies of Science by adding what for the scientists is just another amusing case in point.

As far as intelligence is concerned, we have seen that the Capital-State of Development is fortunately unable to display any considerable amount of farsightedness or subtlety of judgment, given that it has to rely on an increasingly abstract and unsubstantial kind of Faith – nor is it, of course, in a position to imitate the Strategem of the World Spirit who wanted to proclaim himself the governor of History (and of the entire world) through his spokesman Mr. Hegel(1), even though the philosopher exposed him to the condition of historic contingency so as to facilitate his becoming incarnate in the warmonger Bonaparte – in fact we must rather conclude that Power has to resign itself to a certain idiocy, very similar to that which Power itself is trying to instil into the Individuals that form part of its Masses. But we have to admit that the idiocy of Power (we can perfectly perceive the force of stupidity day after day) is entirely sufficient to confuse people, to entangle them in their own calculations and projects and to make them believe its fallacies and lies, or even to make them embrace these fallacies as if they were their own ideas, until they die, unaware of what has happened to them.

And this is why the purity of innocence is a trap that the unruly people must avoid by all means: we cannot afford to be "pure" in this World but must rather be devious and try to preserve with stratagems and disguises the tenderness of our hearts. This is, as you know, the advice of the Gospel (Matthew 10, 16): "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" – more or less the most reasonable strategy to adopt, for the pressure that Persons are exposed to in the sense that their conscience requires them to be pure, upright and coherent is perhaps the last and most dangerous of all traps, given that it is set in the name of Truth... Truth is what certain Police Officers were demanding ("an honest declaration") in previous phases of the Regime(2), truth is what the investigators of the Treasury are demanding ("an honest declaration") in more advanced phases of the same Regime.

But what is necessary in this situation is to take advantage of the internal cracks and contradictions of the Regime, which are, as we have shown in this Analysis, pretty obvious (their perfection is only

an ideal of the future) and constitute the only encouragement for life and reason; and in order to make use of these contradictions and loopholes one cannot but resort to one's own loopholes and contradictions, for these imperfections of one's constitution as a Person are the place where the people is to be found in ourselves. – The conservation of what may remain in us of the people, of the memory of what occurred before History and of the pure rejection of all Ideas (which are the weapons of Power) is the only purpose that justifies the continuous cunning of the snake and indeed makes it inevitable. And it will hardly be necessary to add that where there is no dove, the snake will not be needed, either.

In sum, the Soul had better remain unimpressed by those who are asking for honesty and lifelong coherence between words and deeds: for the people's reason and speech is always practice and theory at the same time, and one of us is not the people – one of us does not make a revolution, nor does one of us make love, and one of us cannot get into paradise, either.

Notes:

(1) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a German philosopher who was born in 1770 and died in 1831.

(2) The author is evidently referring to the Franco dictatorship.

23. On the separation between public and private

Now we have already spent a fair amount of time investigating how it may be that the Development of Capital (and the State, which is the same thing) has entailed the exaltation of Man, that is to say of the Personal Individual, of the “maximizer of benefits” (according to that distinguished Executive), and of the Human Being who believes in Money and is constituted by his Faith, thus contributing to the construction of Masses of Individuals which (given that each Individual wants to have its own share) want collectively whatever the State and Capital tell them they must want. We therefore need not be surprised to see that the private life, the sacred respect for privacy (the British got ahead of us in coining this term) and for the opinions and the likes and dislikes of each one of us is thriving and flourishing in the Welfare State as has never before been the case.

At the same time as our houses are being replaced by residential blocks divided into tiny flats(1), the walls that surround them, invariably thin and with continuous failures of soundproofing, are proving to be ever more sacrosanct and unsurmountable, with the result that none of their inhabitants (each of them in his cavity) may ever realize that his neighbour is at the same time stretched out in his own cavity watching exactly the same television programme, but on his own personal screen. At the same time as the achievements of railway lines, trains, trams and other useful means of transport are destroyed, the Personal Car is being developed and promoted as the essence and chief symbol of Democracy, so that everyone may go more or less at the same hours to the same places, but each of us on his own account.

All this is evidence of the Person’s primary importance for the Regime as well as of the increasing necessity to promote the illusion that each one has a private life in which no-one gives orders except he himself (or in the best case he himself and his family), and that according to the old democratic slogan (which gave rise to all these machinations), “a person’s freedom is only limited by the freedom of those who surround him”, etcetera; a piece of pure fiction that needs to be defended with increasing determination as Power (identical with Money) invades and permeates an increasing part of life and reason.

The same fact may serve us to alert the nonconformists to what is the last and most deceitful trap designed by Power in order to catch the rebels by means of exploiting their naivety: the distinction between a certain kind of ethics (dealing with how one ought to behave according to the demands of one’s conscience) and a certain kind of politics (of the Upper Strata of course), which is where the Combined Persons, Companies, Trade Unions, States and other Public Institutions come into play. And if ethics is occasionally made to interfere in politics (for example in the public outrage about the violent behaviour of terrorists or of those who rape children, or even in legal proceedings in which important people who have been selected to these effects among the representatives of a certain Power are accused of corruption because they have committed some slight infraction of the norms), there is no secret about the effect that this is intended to have: it is to distract people’s attention from the entirely legal corruption on a world-wide scale that the whole capitalist game is based on, from the violence that the State and Capital are committing every day against their own populations by administering them death within lifetime, from the generalized prostitution or submission to Money that any young girl (and any person whatsoever) is condemned to – in sum, it pursues the aim of obstructing whatever kind of politics might rise from below against the Empire of Money.

And this is why it is so important that our intercourse for example with the Treasury must be a strictly private affair, each of us reporting personally on his own goods to the Administration of the Good; or that love affairs must be, along the same lines, a strictly intimate and private matter that no-one is allowed to poke his nose in. Because the result of this is that the Lord (I mean the State and Capital) can poke a lot more than just his nose into tax dealings and love affairs and can exploit

them as instruments to subject people to his dominance. It is in other words the respect of privacy that guarantees the force of tyranny.

For this reason, considering matters from this other point of view, that of the people here below, the first thing that we must achieve is: That the house be unlocked and opened! That there be no more private life, no variety of attitudes or relations (neither financial nor affectionate) apart from what is public and political (as in fact they all of them are, even though people are trying to conceal it), and no sort of good or bad luck for any person apart from whatever may reflect the common fate!

Once again popular language may set an example and serve us as encouragement: the language that provides accommodation to all of us, given that no-one can possess it and it is there for anybody to use, the only kind of human wealth that we get free of any charge, and that for this reason will never stop waging war against Money.

Notes:

(1) There is an untranslatable pun in the author's substituting the correct Spanish expression "vivienda", literally "a place to live in", by the non-existent word "murienda", literally "a place to die in".

24. On the mirror image that is reflected from outside the boundaries of Development

But opening one's house and making it accessible to all implies, among other things, that the sphere of Development, the House of the Welfare Man, must be opened to those who live outside, to the ordinary people who surround it – though certainly not in the sense of administering and regulating the immigration of the poor from outside into the House of Man and Money, as it is currently done, but rather just in the opposite way, as we shall briefly explain in what follows, arriving thus at the final stage of our analysis and coming back, at the same time, to what we said earlier when we were describing, in chapters 3 and 4, where Development is situated and how the misery and the atrocities that happen outside are creeping in.

It is rather obvious that the epidemic hunger, the plagues and the squalor, the Victorian type wars (as for example in the reactivation of the “Balkan Volcano”) and the religious or gunman dictatorships that abound from Persia to Malaysia as well as in Latin America and Africa from the Cape to Morocco – all the freshly cooked prehistory, in short, that surrounds Development and nourishes its television screens, does not surround it (and does not nourish them) by mere accident, nor are there any “natural causes” of its doing so (after all there is nothing “natural” among human beings), but that it is all being organized by Development just in order to sustain the Reign of Welfare. And this is the sense in which the things that happen inside are also becoming apparent in outside events.

And therefore, if there is anyone who has already lost the sensitivity to directly perceive the terror, the misery and the hypocrisy of this Welfare Regime in spite of living here inside of it, if he remains unimpressed by the suburban conglomerations, by the residential blocks divided into tiny cavities, each one with its television set to illuminate the eyes of its ghostly inhabitants, by the ever-increasing general traffic jam (are we still able to imagine how delicious these streets and these parks and forests would be if the Car was not there?) and by the growing groups of youngsters who out of sheer boredom devote themselves to vomiting at every street corner – if there is anyone who still manages to consider all this “only natural” and to believe that it is “just what the times are bringing along”, so that in other words there is hardly any need to take it on board, then this person may well take advantage of looking at the mirror image that is reflected from the outside of Development, in order to perceive more clearly what Welfare is like – in other words, he may well do just the opposite of what the Mass Media are doing when they keep presenting us the atrocities suffered by other people with a view to making the Masses feel pity, give alms for charity on certain occasions (exactly as they did before the advent of Development, when the nuns used to collect funding for the poor little Chinamen who did not yet enjoy the blessings of the Faith) and in any case find consolation and encouragement in thinking of all the Welfare that we can enjoy here in these parts, where all those terrible things do not happen – I mean just the opposite of this: that people might look at the mirror image in order to realize the truth about this Welfare of ours.

Let me emphasize, above all, the immense force of an Ideal that persuades thousands of young men and women from outside Development to hurl themselves in whatever way they can into the Centre, as if it were Paradise, and to surrender themselves to Money our Saviour: the ships, packed to the brim with Albanian people who hope to reach the Italian coast, the boats crammed with Moroccans who are trying to escape from their filthy country (a notable pearl in the necklace of miserable tyrannies that Development wears for its own decoration), paddling across the Straits of Gibraltar, the countless young women from the ruined countries whose Regimes were presented by Development during the last forty years, just in order to deceive and intimidate its own population, as “the other kind of Power”, now posted at the motorways next to the gates of Paradise and anxious to prostitute themselves to the occupants of the Welfare Cars...

Such is the fascination that the Reign of Welfare exerts on the young creatures of its surroundings;

and only ghosts can be as fascinating as that. The person who, in view of the monstrous influence of these illusions on the suburbanites' hearts, does not know to recognize, as if it were in a mirror, the illusory, fallacious and tyrannical nature of this Welfare State in which we ourselves are fluttering – this person must already be completely blind and deaf, and prepared to swallow the substitutes of life and reason without any resistance.

May the people find in this mirror image the force of disgust and revulsion against what they get sold as their own world!

25. On not keeping up with the times

And to conclude our analysis (for now at least): In the same way as the outdated atrocities and tyrannies that surround Development may be understood in the opposite sense as they are presented to us by the Mass-Producing Media, not as a means of terrifying the Masses pointlessly and making them feel how well-off they are in the Reign of Welfare, but rather as a mirror image and a revelation of what this Welfare really consists in – in an analogous fashion the medieval and paleolithic barbarities, the acts of torture committed by the Inquisition, the wars started by the Nazis and the Japanese, the Napoleonic butcheries, the Tartar invasions and the massacres of the Romans – all of them images that are being tirelessly regurgitated by television as well, and that are presented to our eyes on a daily basis in order to force the astonished contemporary television spectators, deeply sunk in their armchairs, to admit how much we have progressed and how much Peace we enjoy – in an analogous fashion these images may perhaps be understood in the opposite way, that is, helping us perceive (as if they were caricatures of the present) the barbarities, the acts of torture and the administration of death that the State of Development is indulging in.

The person who knows how to recognize in the combustion of every coach full of old-age pensioners the flames of the stake in which Joan of Arc(1) or Giordano Bruno(2) were burnt, in the pack trains of children who go hunchbacked under the weight of their schoolbags full of Culture the killing of the innocent committed by Herod(3), in the paperwork and the computer screens of our bureaucracies the flashes of daggers and the grinding of bones of the campaigns of Troy and of Mount Gurugu(4), in the good-natured smile above the tie of the Executive who is having his business breakfast the evil smile of the Tamerlan movie(5) or of Emperor Bokassa ordering his prisoners to be slaughtered(6) – this person will perhaps have succeeded in putting the imagery of History to good use.

All the epochs of History are forming part of the present, while the present itself is no epoch whatsoever.

And nonconformist or rebellious people had better not believe in History at all, for the Faith in History is cultivated and promoted precisely by the Capital-State in order to ensure that the Mass Individuals, when they believe in the existence of other historic periods, believe as well in the Future to which the Capital-State has condemned them, and to ensure that, once they believe that there were other historic epochs, they convince themselves that the present is some sort of historic epoch as well (in fact, television is continuously converting our present time into History, simply by inserting it into the frame of the little screen), and as it is well known that the only people who live in any kind of historic epoch are people such as Xerxes(7) and Napoleon and the like – in other words, the dead – , the administration of death to those Persons who form part of the Masses has thereby been successfully achieved.

But it is obvious that these other epochs of History are nothing other than pieces of imagery that are made to form part of what is happening to ourselves, and that our present is no historic epoch whatsoever, but rather our lifetime, a time in which we speak while we are speaking, although They want to kill and to convert it into the dead Time that is measured by clocks and stored away by Historians.

This is why we must not believe that there are different periods or epochs; and the insistence on “keeping up with the times” that dominates the small talk of youngsters on motorcycles as well as the International Conferences of Educated Gentlemen, just to keep themselves up to date, is the most reliable method of surrendering to Money and Power, or in a word, of surrendering to Death.

Let us never keep up with the times! The last and only genuine revolution is that of the dead who

refuse to be dead; and the most obvious and tangible fact we can think of is the fact that there always remains a heart that keeps beating below the spheres of Dominance, a heart that knows to say “How good was that!”, as well as to say “No!” without giving a damn about the Agenda or the Fashion of the Day.

And after all, there is no hurry. For the people has this enormous advantage of being under no obligation to exist, which means it will never die.

Notes:

(1) A national heroine of France and a catholic saint who was born around 1412 and burnt at the stake on 30 May 1431.

(2) An Italian astronomer and philosopher who was born in 1548 and burnt at the stake on 17 February 1600 after being found guilty of heresy.

(3) Herod the Great, a Roman client king of Israel, lived from 74 BC until 4 BC and according to the Gospel of Matthew was responsible for the so-called “Massacre of the Innocents”.

(4) Mount Gurugu is a mountain near the north coast of Morocco, site of fierce battles between Spanish troops and Riffian rebels at the beginning of the 20th century.

(5) Timur or Tamerlan, who was born in 1336 and died in 1405, was a Turko-Mongol conqueror of central Asia.

(6) Jean-Bédél Bokassa, who was born in 1921 and died in 1996, was emperor of the Central African Empire.

(7) Xerxes the Great was a Persian emperor who reigned from 485 BC until 465 BC.